



**Discrimination and
work: breaking down
the barriers faced by
ethnically minoritised
young people**

March 2024



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Foreword

Lord Simon Woolley, Board member, Youth Futures Foundation

As a founding Board Member I have witnessed firsthand the crucial work that Youth Futures Foundation does, both to take forward the findings of the Government's Race Disparity Audit, and in putting young people's voices at the centre of system change.

The findings of this report, building on the wealth of evidence from across the sector, will be uncomfortable reading for many. Having spent my career trying to inspire young people who look like me, and being part of a movement working to dismantle the huge injustices young people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds face, I had hoped that the experiences I went through as a young person would no longer be a reality today. I had hoped that being judged on the colour of your skin, on your ethnicity, on your religion, would no longer be a barrier to achieving great things.

But this report brings home the stark reality that there is still a long way to go. Almost half of respondents to this survey (48%) said they had experienced some level of prejudice or discrimination when seeking to enter the

workplace. Racist jokes and 'banter' are still all too common and help foster a culture of silence where young people from ethnic minority backgrounds feel afraid to speak up.

And this is not only having a devastating impact on their mental health – it's an employment crisis moving quickly into view. A quarter of young people in the UK are now from an ethnic minority background, so doing nothing cannot be an option.

If young people are held back, we are all held back as a nation. Employers and policymakers must treat these findings as a wake-up call. Brushing the experiences of young people under the carpet cannot be allowed to happen.

There are inspiring examples of good practice out there, and at Youth Futures Foundation we are working alongside



employers, policymakers and civil society organisations to close the employment gap for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, unleash talent, and give young people a pathway to excel.

Although the report's findings are shocking, I am still optimistic we as a country can do better. The first step has to be treating evidence like this seriously.

I hope this report gives hope to young people – both the 3,250 young men and women who contributed to the research and those who have experienced similar situations. Your bravery in speaking up is admirable, your call for change is being heard, and we stand with you.



Introduction

Barry Fletcher, CEO, Youth Futures Foundation

The 2021 census shows that a quarter of England's future workforce will soon come from an ethnic minority background. However, we know that too many ethnically minoritised young people will face significant barriers to employment. In order to unleash their talent and potential, we must take the time to understand what these barriers are, and then take action to dismantle them.

Existing evidence, including government data, the Trade Union Congress Survey 'Still Rigged: Racism in the UK Labour Market 2022' and our previous research published in 2023, consistently shows that young people see discrimination based on their ethnicity as the biggest barrier to getting into work. This new survey is the largest known to have been conducted in England specifically with young people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds.

An amazing 3,250 young people have given up their time to tell us about their experiences and share their views – often about very difficult and sensitive situations. The survey offers valuable new findings about the specific barriers they face when finding and progressing through employment. It helps us



understand the discrimination that too many are facing once in the workplace: what it looks like, what the impact of it is, and what employers and policy makers can and must do to address it. This is not only the right thing to do for young people but also for our economy and our society.

We are indebted to each and every young person who took part in this study, and to the experts and ethnic minority-led organisations from across the sector who participated in round tables and discussions, working alongside us to shape the recommendations for change in this report.

Conducting work to support young people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds is a core part of what we do. As the What Works Centre for youth employment, we will build on this survey in three key ways:

1. **Building the evidence base:** We will continue to collate and curate high-quality evidence on the barriers faced by young people through research like this. We are currently undertaking research focusing on the experience of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds in accessing apprenticeships and we are planning research exploring the experiences of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller young people in the labour market.
2. **Funding projects that make a real impact:** We are taking what we have learned and putting it into action. For example, investing in expanding our Connected Futures programme to areas where we can reach and support more young people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds as we know these communities are experiencing some of the largest disparities in finding and retaining good jobs.
3. **Driving best practice with employers:** We are proactively working with employers to drive best practice on the ground, including partnering with employer bodies to leverage their influence and expertise.



Seyi Obakin OBE
Chair, Youth Futures Foundation Board

"This survey shines a light in a way that nothing else has on what is happening for ethnically minoritised young people. If you don't know that a problem exists, you can't solve the problem, so the time young people have given to participate in this survey is hugely important. It will open the door – not just for them but for other young people who face similar challenges."



Executive Summary

This report reflects the view of 3,250 ethnically minoritised young people aged 18-25 in England; **the largest known survey on experiences of discrimination among ethnically minoritised young people to date.**

Key survey findings

1. Discrimination

Discrimination remains a significant barrier for young people getting into and getting on at work, with concerns about discrimination due to ethnicity particularly common among Black respondents.

- Almost half of respondents to this survey (48%) said they had experienced some level of prejudice or discrimination when seeking to enter the workplace.
- Discrimination based on a person's ethnicity was the most frequently described type of discrimination.

2. Reporting

Although a high proportion of young people experienced workplace discrimination, the overwhelming majority didn't report it as they didn't think it would make a difference.

- 79% of those who experienced discrimination in the workplace told us that they did not formally report it.

3. Impact

Discrimination is also having a personal impact on young people, eroding their self-confidence – with the issue being especially acute for women.

- 41% of the young people who had experienced discrimination agreed that it had a negative emotional impact in their everyday lives, and 38% said it had resulted in a loss of confidence.

Nearly three-quarters of respondents were motivated to look for opportunities with other companies (73%) or even other industries (71%) after experiencing discrimination at work.

4. Support

Young people have clear thoughts on what employers and policy makers can do to support them.

- A quarter of young people think that guaranteed work experience is one of the most important interventions to help them into good employment.

Recommendations for employers and policy makers

Employers should:

- Publicly report on ethnicity pay gaps as well as overall representation, providing data on pay, working hours, promotion and representation in senior roles, and develop an action plan to address the gaps.
- Ensure their early talent pipeline efforts are inclusive and equitable, with attracting ethnically minoritised young people to their business in mind. They should also look to offer quality opportunities to young ethnically minoritised talent coming into the workplace, including guaranteed work experience and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Address discriminatory behaviour and build an inclusive culture through taking a zero-tolerance approach to racist remarks, jokes and 'banter' and non-inclusive behaviours by colleagues, clients, and customers.

Establish a transparent 'speak up' culture and reporting practices, ensuring policies are understood and managers and employees are supported and trained to be accountable.

Policy makers should:

- Ensure there is greater understanding and visibility of what is happening at scale regarding the progress and outcomes of ethnically minoritised young people through better public data and reporting.
- Mandate employers to publicly report on ethnicity pay gaps as well as overall representation.
- Increase support for schools and colleges to better enable ethnically minoritised young people (particularly those most at risk of becoming NEET) to be more prepared for transitioning well into work through facilitating more employer engagement opportunities and careers support.
- Identify and consider existing and new support interventions that could give better integrated 'one stop shop' support to ethnically minoritised young people who have left education and are struggling to secure good employment, including expanding the network of Youth Hubs.

Survey findings

1. Experiences of discrimination at work

Career barriers

Discrimination remains a significant barrier for young people getting into and getting on at work. Almost half of respondents to this survey (48%) faced some level of prejudice or discrimination when seeking to enter the workplaceⁱ, and 55% believe they would be held back in their career due to some form of discrimination.

Almost a third of respondents (30%) who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) felt that prejudice or discrimination in hiring practices was the single main challenge for young people entering the workplace.

Over a quarter (26%) of all respondents said discrimination based on their ethnicity was the main barrier in their careers, significantly higher than for other protected characteristics such as religion (15%), age (10%), or gender (9%).

Concerns about discrimination due to ethnicity were particularly common among Black respondents, who were most likely to name discrimination due to ethnicity as a potential barrier (35% did so) compared with all Asian respondents (25%), Chinese respondents (33%) and those from Mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds (25%).

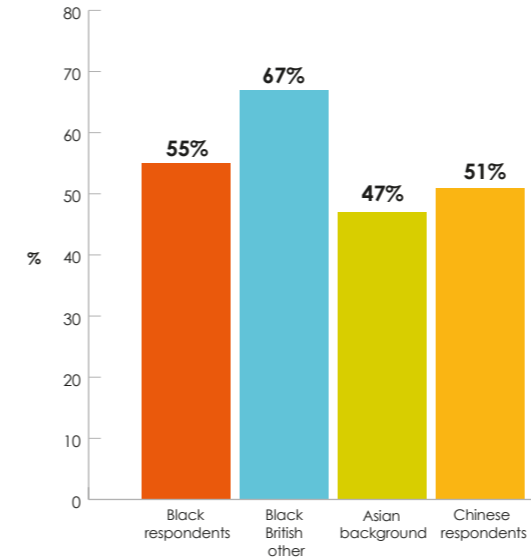
Concerns about employers holding low expectations because of one's ethnic background were also prevalent. These were most often reported by young Black women (35%) and young Asian women (31%) compared to young Black and Asian men (28% and 27% respectively).

Workplace discrimination

Overall, experiences of discrimination in the workplace are commonⁱⁱ; whether based on ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality or because of a disabilityⁱⁱⁱ.

Workplace discrimination was most commonly experienced by Black respondents. Over half (55%) of all Black respondents had experienced some form of discrimination, rising to nearly seven in ten (67%) for respondents identifying as 'Black British other' (rather than British Caribbean or British African)^{iv}. Just under half (47%) of respondents from an Asian background said they had experienced discrimination at work, with Chinese respondents (51%) reporting the highest level of discrimination for this group.

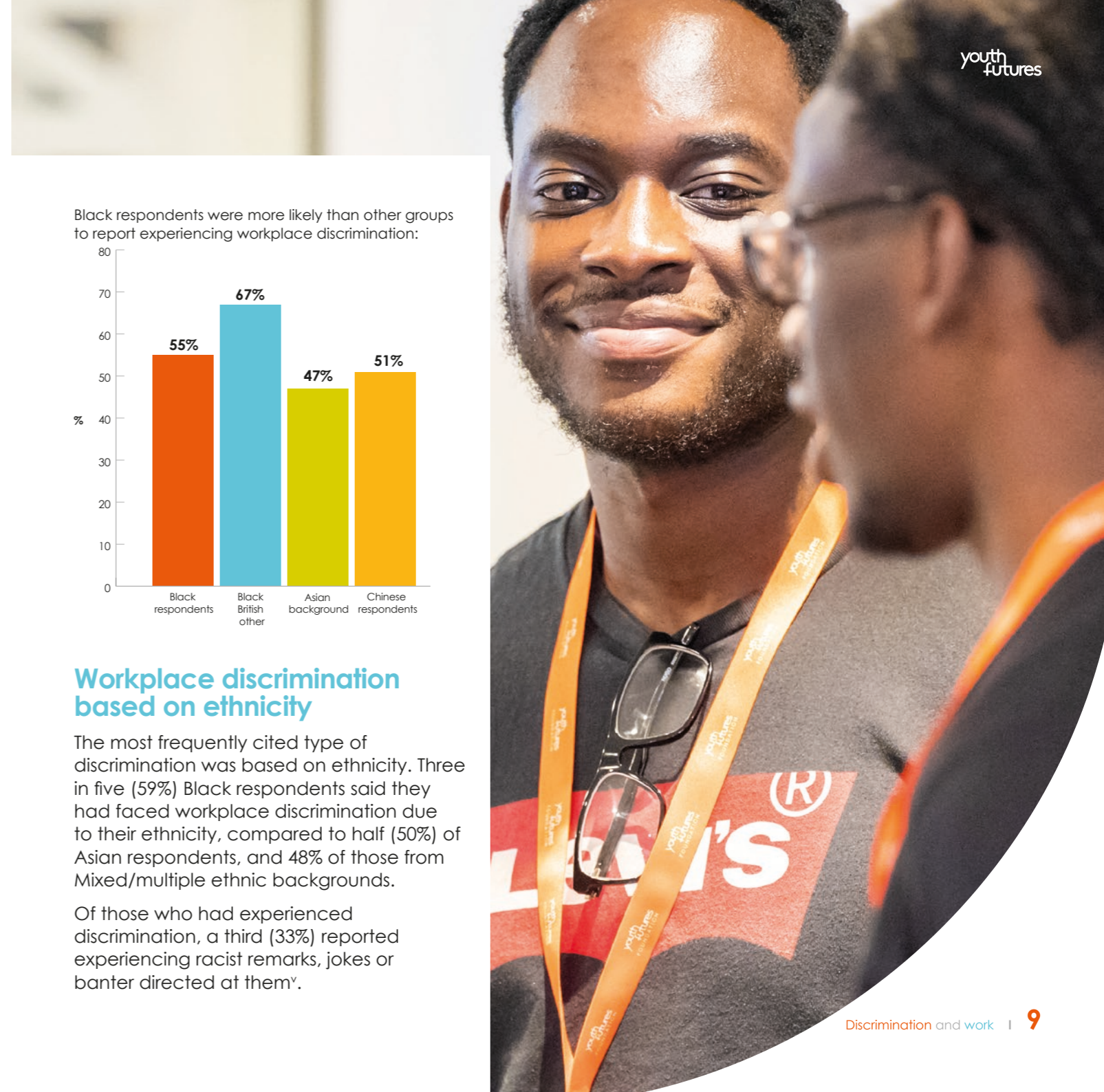
Black respondents were more likely than other groups to report experiencing workplace discrimination:



Workplace discrimination based on ethnicity

The most frequently cited type of discrimination was based on ethnicity. Three in five (59%) Black respondents said they had faced workplace discrimination due to their ethnicity, compared to half (50%) of Asian respondents, and 48% of those from Mixed/multiple ethnic backgrounds.

Of those who had experienced discrimination, a third (33%) reported experiencing racist remarks, jokes or banter directed at them^v.

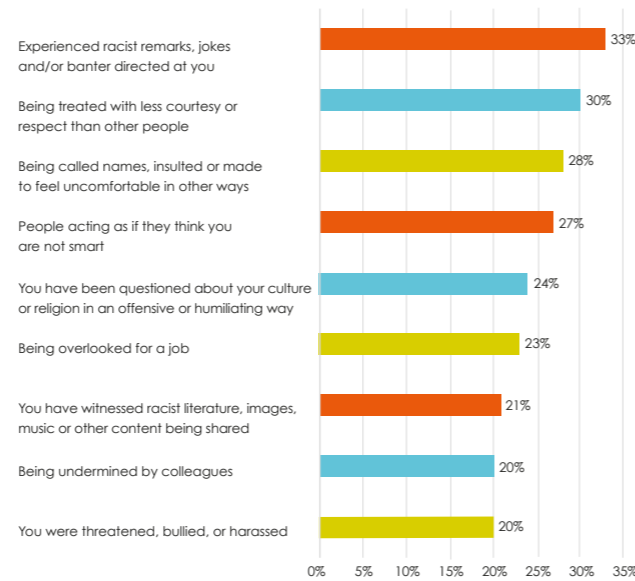


Two thirds reported overhearing racial slurs or jokes at work from a co-worker or supervisor (66%), rising to seven in ten (71%) from a customer, client, or partner. One in five (20%) respondents said they had been referred to in a derogatory manner.

These experiences varied by ethnicity: 46% of those from Mixed ethnic backgrounds reported experiencing racist remarks, jokes, or banter, compared to 36% of Black respondents, 32% of Asian respondents and 24% of those from white minoritised ethnic backgrounds. **Female respondents reported that they faced a dual discrimination due to both their ethnicity and their gender^{vi}.**

Three-quarters of respondents (76%) had experienced feeling that they had to work harder than others to get the same treatment as their colleagues. A similar number said that they felt more closely watched than others (75%), and that customers, clients and/or partners assumed they were more junior or less capable than their colleagues (75%)^{vii}. Black respondents were most likely to say they had been treated as though they weren't smart (32%), compared to 25% of people from Asian backgrounds and 26% of those from Mixed/multiple ethnicities.

Main types of discrimination experienced:



Ethnicity was the main reason that respondents felt their contribution had been overlooked or disregarded at work^{viii}. Just over half (52%) of respondents said their contribution had been overlooked or ignored because of reasons relating to their ethnicity. This was significantly higher than those who said they had experienced this because of other protected characteristics, such as religious belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability.



Romana:

"I always felt that I was left out, not just in the workplace but in school and things. I had to go above and beyond just to be noticed, I was always overlooked. I feel like it's taken my managers longer to recognise my potential and my service than other workers."



Yi Kang, Future Voices Group ambassador:

"I've had experiences in interviews, networking or in the work environment where people will ask odd questions like 'where are you originally from?' and push that point, trying to make assumptions on perhaps my beliefs, my religion and other things which are unhelpful and not relevant to the job I'm trying to do."



Olivia, Future Voices Group ambassador:

"I had an issue with a senior colleague who wouldn't allow me to state how I felt in meetings. Because of this I felt isolated and alienated within the workplace. After speaking to them I felt more comfortable, but I can definitely see how getting to that first hurdle of raising the issue is hard when you're feeling isolated on top of having imposter syndrome [because of your ethnicity]."



Case study: Hamara Centre

Hamara is the largest ethnic minority voluntary and community organisation in Leeds. Dedicated to delivering innovative and transformative services, Hamara aims to improve the quality of life of the most disadvantaged people of all ages across the areas of Leeds and Bradford.

Raheem Mohammad,
Director
Hamara Centre:

"It's evident that opportunities are limited for those from ethnic minority backgrounds. From the moment of applying for a role through to progression within an organisation, they are judged on their background. I speak to older people who have been coming to the Hamara Centre over the past 30 years that we have operated in Leeds, and decades on, young people are still facing the same challenges.

"I myself was a young person in the Hamara Centre and have benefitted enormously from its support. It really acts as an anchor and a catalyst for

young people. They can gain work experience, have opportunities to upskill and get qualifications so they have the best chance possible when it comes to applying for jobs."

Mustafa:

"The biggest thing looking at my own experience would be the stigma and labels given to you as a young South Asian individual. I've previously been deemed 'unmanageable' because my managers haven't understood me as they don't get where I am coming from.

"We do training workshops on so many different things, but we never do them on different cultures and it would help with cohesion and integration that is so important.

"The Hamara Centre has given me an opportunity to build my skills and CV. They paid for my cricket coaching badges so I can get my level 2 qualification, which has enabled me to start my own business."

2. Reporting discrimination at work

Extent to which discrimination is reported

Although a high proportion of young people experienced workplace discrimination, many do not formally report it.

Of those who did report discrimination, 17% said little to no action was taken, with the situation being ignored or otherwise dismissed without a satisfactory resolution. This was consistent across all ethnic groups and industries.

Almost a quarter (21%) of young people who had experienced and reported discrimination said that reporting discrimination achieved nothing, while 4% of respondents said that reporting discrimination had negatively impacted them^{ix}. These findings represent a substantial minority of young people with negative experiences of reporting discrimination.



"I was told it would be sorted out and prevented from happening again. However, nothing seemed to change."

Reasons for choosing not to report discrimination at work

Almost seven in ten (69%) of those who did not report their experience of discrimination said it was because they didn't believe it would make a difference^x. Just over a third (36%) said they didn't report it because they didn't have enough evidence to support their claim, and a quarter (24%) said they didn't think they would be taken seriously.



Oscar,
Chair, Future Voices Group:

"What struck me most about the data was not only the rates of how many young people experience these things, but how many didn't feel comfortable to report it. A lot of the discrimination the research talks about is really subtle, hard to identify and hard to report and it makes sense why people don't feel comfortable to take that to their manager because 'it was just a joke' or 'it was just a little comment', **but all those little interactions build up to something really important.**"



Olivia

Future Voices Group ambassador:

"I think that young minoritised people don't feel comfortable raising issues at work because they are worried that it will affect their position in the company, how their boss sees them and their ability to progress. Employers need to create spaces that feel safe so that young people feel that what they are saying will be heard and taken seriously."

3. Impact of discrimination



Dr Hannah King

Research Fellow, UKRI and Youth Futures Foundation:

"This report shares the findings of one of the largest representative surveys carried out in England with ethnically minoritised young people. Importantly it shines a light on the discrimination they have faced in the workplace and the impact of this upon their working lives and careers. For half of the young people surveyed to have experienced some form of workplace discrimination based on a protected characteristic, most often their ethnicity, demonstrates the scale of this issue. Concerningly, 79% did not formally report the discrimination, with the majority believing that reporting it would not make a difference. Systemic racism clearly continues to dominate and shape the workplace experiences of ethnically minoritised young people.

"The negative impacts, particularly on self-esteem and confidence, coupled with the discrimination itself, are significant barriers for young ethnically minoritised people in the world of work. The report harnesses the experiences shared by young people in the survey to propose meaningful changes, which stand to improve their employment journeys and trajectories. It reminds us that tackling racism and discrimination is the responsibility of everyone, including in the workplace."

Discrimination reduces confidence

Two in every five (41%) young people who experienced discrimination reported that it had a negative emotional impact on their everyday lives^{xi}, and had resulted in a loss of confidence (38%) among other impacts^{xii}. This was worse for female respondents, nearly half of whom (45%) said they had felt a loss of confidence compared to just over a quarter (27%) of male respondents. Motivation was also an issue. Those from an Asian background were more likely to feel demotivated, with almost a third (32%) reporting this impact, compared to a quarter (25%) of young Black people.

Those who were not in employment, education, or training (NEET) experienced a similar emotional impact to those who were in work. However, they were much more likely to report a loss of confidence because of experiences of discrimination.



Impact of discrimination:



Samuela

Future Voices Group ambassador:

"The loss of confidence has a ripple effect on how young people feel about themselves, but also how they progress in their own careers. If your confidence has been battered, you're not going to apply for more senior roles, and you will doubt your contributions in the workplace."



Zainab Asunramu

Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer, Fawcett Society:

"Black and Minority Ethnic women across the UK know too well that experiencing racism at work is the norm, impacting on promotional opportunities within the workplace, well-being and motivation. So sadly, it is unsurprising but still shocking that this important survey found that the impact on confidence was more profound for female respondents than their male counterparts."

"However, as outlined in our Broken Ladders report this does not need to be the case, employers can call time on these experiences by taking simple actions such as making progression routes explicit and well-known rather than based on informal networks, and by creating anti-racism action plans which are clear, actionable and enforceable."

Discrimination impacts on jobseeking

Being overlooked for a job, promotion, other progression opportunities or being undermined by colleagues impacted on

respondents in other ways, most strongly in the drive to seek alternative work. Almost three-quarters of young people who had experienced discrimination said they'd responded by seeking opportunities with other companies (73%) or even other industries (71%).

Over half of respondents (55%) felt motivated to look for other opportunities within the company they work for, and three in ten (30%) said they felt de-motivated to work in their current role^{xiii}.

Percentage who have been impacted by discrimination in the following ways:

I was motivated to...	
... look for opportunities with other companies	73%
... look for opportunities in other industries	71%
... share experience with others	67%
... educate others about my background and culture	67%
... look for other opportunities within the company I worked for	55%

These responses varied by ethnicity. Four in five (79%) Black respondents felt motivated to seek opportunities at other companies compared with nearly three-quarters (73%) of Asian respondents. Conversely, 29% of those from Asian backgrounds were motivated to explore other opportunities within their current company, compared to 22% of Black respondents.



Yi Kang

Future Voices Group ambassador:

"It's worrying that young peoples' confidence is being eroded because once they lose confidence, they will lose hope. Once they lose hope, they will lose the motivation to apply for jobs and also the motivation to really excel in their jobs as well. Having good employment is really transformational. A good job really links to mental health, wellbeing and all those things around you. Without that opportunity, a lot of negative things in society start to happen and young people will always be at the centre of that."



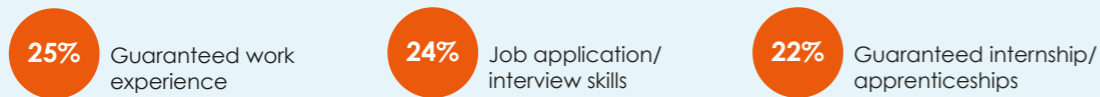
Recommendations for employers and policy makers

What young people say they want to see

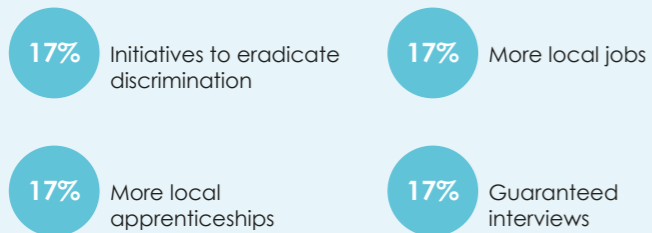
Although the main challenges outlined in this report relate to social and cultural attitudes, young people identified tangible interventions that can help them to upskill and to find opportunities for themselves.

These interventions are steps that both employers, and policy makers, can take.

The three priorities for intervention as selected by participants were:



Wider solutions were also selected but were less popular:



Sandra Kerr, CBE, Race Equality Director, Business in the Community:

"In 2023, BITC launched the results of our **Race at Work** Charter survey, capturing the views of nearly 250 UK employers representing 1.2 million UK employees. Whilst the survey showed that almost all employers have good policies for bullying and harassment, it was disappointing to see that only one in four review these policies to ensure that they are working. As Youth Futures workplace discrimination report shows, 33% of young people from ethnic minority groups have experienced racist remarks, jokes, or banter.

"Employers can make an impact on reversing these experiences by understanding that their policies are actually working through open and transparent reporting and action planning. I welcome the recommendations proposed within this report."

Youth Futures has taken the summary findings in this report to a range of experts in the employment and inclusion space, in order to form recommendations to positively move the sector forward for the benefit of young people.

There are simple, practical actions that employers and policy makers can take to tackle the impact of discrimination head on.

Employers should:

- Publicly report on ethnicity pay gaps as well as overall representation, providing data on pay, working hours, promotion and representation in senior roles, and develop an action plan to address the gaps.
- Ensure their early talent pipeline efforts are inclusive and equitable, with attracting ethnically minoritised young people to their business in mind
- Review recruitment practices to eliminate discrimination and bias, ensure imagery and use of language is inclusive, and ensure jobs are being advertised in places where young people can access them.
- Look to offer quality opportunities for young ethnically minoritised talent coming into the workplace: this could include guaranteed work experience placements, apprenticeships opportunities, and sign posting to support programmes for job applications and interview skills.

- Address discriminatory behaviour and build an inclusive culture:
 - Take a zero-tolerance approach to racist remarks, jokes and 'banter' and non-inclusive behaviours by colleagues, clients, and customers.
 - Establish a culture where speaking up is encouraged, and there is transparency on the process and outcome of reporting discrimination.
- Implement and enforce transparent and accessible policies on safeguarding, bullying and harassment and flexible working, ensuring that these are understood, regularly reviewed and that people feel safe to activate them.
- Ensure that line managers are trained and supported to be inclusive, proactive and clear about progression routes, and establish training and development plans to support all employees.

Zahra:

"Employers can help to tackle discrimination of any sort by educating themselves and their employees, while also ensuring there are plans in place to support individuals facing discrimination."

Olivia

Future Voices Group ambassador:

"In order to get this right, employers need to take a zero-tolerance policy, educate themselves and others within their workplace, and listen to the statistics because they tell the truth about the impact this is having on young minoritised people."

Ruth Busby OBE

HR Director, GWR and Board member, Youth Futures Foundation

"Just providing placements wasn't enough, so we now provide support after the individuals have finished those placements with recruitment advice and support and a little bit of coaching after the event to try and help more of them get full time employment after doing the work experience."



Claire Camara

Global Chief People Officer for EssenceMediacom and member of Youth Futures People and Culture Committee:

"For employers, the survey should be a valuable resource for not only how they are supporting young people into work, but how they create a culture and environment that enables young people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds to thrive and progress once in work. This is vital not only for the wellbeing and progression of the young people but also for employers who are currently reporting high levels of vacancies, skills shortages, and a need to bring diverse talent into their organisations. With 25% of our future workforce estimated to come from ethnic backgrounds, this is a brilliant opportunity to unlock untapped potential amongst many of our young people and get fit for the future of our ever-changing workforce."

Case study: Browne Jacobson

Mentoring aspiring Black lawyers: creating a sustainable pipeline of future talent.

Black people are disproportionately underrepresented in the legal profession, particularly in senior roles. The overall proportion of Black lawyers working in UK law firms is just 3%. Browne Jacobson is committed to playing their part in changing the landscape and in March 2022, piloted their first REACH Mentoring Programme, aimed at kick-starting the careers of aspiring Black lawyers across the country. Over half of the original mentees were offered employment at the firm. The second year of the pilot launched in March 2023, with retention and promotion in mind.

Case study: A.F Blakemore

Building an inclusive culture: a zero-tolerance approach.

Last year A.F Blakemore reviewed their Equality, Inclusion & Diversity (EID) and Dignity at Work policies, relaunching them with a series of initiatives to support their commitment to an inclusive and friendly workplace culture. This included working in partnership with Business in the Community to develop a Race at Work training programme, annual Race at Work listening groups, and a dedicated confidential bullying, harassment and discrimination reporting line. 91% of colleagues in their 2022 Colleague Engagement Survey agreed or strongly agreed that 'people of all backgrounds and identities are valued equally at A. F. Blakemore'

Case study: PwC

Voluntary ethnicity pay gap reporting: holding themselves accountable.

Since 2018, PwC have published their ethnicity pay and bonus gaps, driven by a responsibility to role model and promote inclusion and equality both internally and externally.

PwC's approach has always been based on data analysis and insights. By using the personal data that their people voluntarily share with them in their statistical analysis and reporting they can pinpoint areas to take targeted action and inform their approach, whilst measuring the rate of change. The transparency and accountability that goes alongside this work is more important to PwC than ever. This is due to the level of expectation of employers and business in helping to address the inequalities that exist across the UK. They continue to ensure that the data they produce is as accurate and clear as possible. Since 2021 they have broken down their ethnicity pay and bonus gaps to show their Asian, Black, Chinese and Mixed Ethnicity gaps.

The most recent report launched in 2023 shows a reduction in several of their pay gaps compared to 2021 and, where they have been monitoring trends over a longer term (gender and ethnicity). The positive trend reflects their commitment to delivering against a five-point action plan, focused on inclusive culture, senior level accountability, fair work allocation, recruitment activity and progression coaching. The five-point action plan sets targets which are published on their website alongside the annual report which charts progress against the targets.

Whilst PwC state they have work left to do, these actions continue to strengthen their talent pipeline and in 2023, of their internal admission to partnership, 42% were female and 19% from an ethnic minority background.

This is important because all their pay gaps are driven by under-representation of the relevant population in senior roles within the business. This is why they have set targets by grade for gender and ethnic background which are based on accelerating their progress over a 5-year period.

Very simply, delivering these targets is essential to closing their pay gaps.



Addressing employment gaps between different ethnic minority groups and their white peers will require action on several fronts, including better advice and information for employers and steps to effect change at national policy level. There should be a relentless focus on supporting young people from minority ethnic backgrounds into high-quality full-time jobs with opportunities for progression to help deliver sustainable improvements in their employment prospects.

Seyi Obakin OBE
Chair, Youth Futures
Foundation Board

"These survey results are absolutely important for policy makers to take notice of and think about what they can do to make the difference. We have one million vacancies up and down the country and yet we have thousands of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds who are not getting opportunities. Policy makers must think about how they offer opportunities for these young people – matching them with employers and supporting them within the workplace. It's not just about getting work, but good quality work that they can progress in."

Policy makers should:

- Improve understanding and visibility of what is happening at scale regarding the progress and outcomes of ethnically minoritised young people:
 - All government national statistics and local / regional datasets should include ethnic breakdowns in as much granularity as possible
 - Where possible, relevant government surveys should ask young people to identify their own ethnicity.
- Mandate employers to publicly report on ethnicity pay gaps as well as overall representation:
 - This should include providing data on pay, working hours, promotion and representation in senior roles and developing an action plan to address the gaps.
- Increase support for schools and colleges to better enable ethnically minoritised young people (particularly those most at risk of becoming NEET) to be more prepared for transitioning into work including facilitating more opportunities to engage with employers through careers education^{xiv}.



Dr Shabna Begum

Interim CEO, Runnymede Trust:

"Publishing an Ethnicity Pay Gap (EPG) report is a vital first step in identifying and measuring the scale of racialised disparities and tackling workplace discrimination and racism in any organisation. Mandatory reporting if implemented with care and consideration can be a robust and rigorous way of generating transparency, creating lines of accountability, and spurring meaningful action.

"Without accurate data, organisations cannot understand or evaluate any measures that are there to promote greater equity in the workplace. Youth Futures Foundation's Workplace Discrimination survey highlights the need for increased transparency and urgent action, with over half of all the young people surveyed having experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity.

"Mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting is an important step to address this experience and generate real change across employers."

- Increase interventions that could give better integrated 'one stop shop' support to ethnically minoritised young people who have left education and are struggling to secure good employment. Evidence shows interventions such as the DWP Youth Employment Initiative had a positive impact on employment prospects of those from a minoritised ethnic background who engaged with the programmes.
- Government could consider expanding the network of Youth Hubs which have similar integrated support features, and work with local authorities and devolved regions to increase access to youth hubs

Conclusions

The survey findings tell us clearly that ethnically minoritised young people still experience discrimination from seeking to enter work and, once in employment, throughout their young working lives.

Young people are telling us that not only do these experiences have a profoundly negative impact on self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivation; they may also cause young people to reconsider their employment decisions and to explore other opportunities. Not only are the experiences described in this report unjust, but they risk having negative economic impacts. With nearly a quarter of the population under 25 coming

from ethnically minoritised backgrounds, disenfranchising such a large part of the workforce may have serious negative impacts for employers.

Employers, the education system, government and society all have a role to play in ensuring that our young people can access work and be supported to reach their full potential. There is much more to be done in continuing to listen to and learn from young people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds, and to test and understand what works to move forward. But the actions recommended in this report, grounded in the experiences of thousands of young men and women, and backed by experts, are an important and critical step we can, and should, take.

The findings in this report are from a survey of 3,250 ethnically minoritised young people conducted in 2023 by Savanta on behalf of Youth Futures Foundation.



- i. Which three of the following, do you think are the main challenges facing young people from minoritised ethnic communities entering the workplace? (N=3250)
- ii It is against the law to discriminate against someone on the basis of a protected characteristic. The full list of protected characteristics is available at <https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights>.
- iii QG1. Do you feel you have been discriminated against because of a personal characteristic such as your health, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic background? (n=3250)
- iv Please note small base sizes (less than 100) so results should be treated as indicative only.
- v QG2. Did your experiences of discrimination include any of the following? (n=1642)
- vi QG2. Did your experiences of discrimination include any of the following? (n=1642)
- vii QG2. Did your experiences of discrimination include any of the following?
- viii QW1. Do you feel your contribution at work has previously been overlooked or disregarded due to..... (n=3250)
- ix QW9. What was the outcome of reporting it (n=130)
- x QW11. Why did you choose not to report your experience of discrimination? (n=221)
- xi QG4. If you feel comfortable, please tell us a little more about the circumstances of one or more instances of discrimination that you have experienced, and about how it made you feel. (n=1640)
- xii QG5. Did your experience of discrimination impact you in any of the following ways?
- xiii QW12. You said that that at work you felt you had been sidelined/overlooked or undermined by others, due to discrimination, to what extent did this impact you in each of the following ways? (n=778)
- xiv Harris-Madden, DaMia, "Measuring the Effects of Youth Participation in a Government-Funded, Urban After-School Employment and Training Program: A Case Study Summative Evaluation" (2017). Education Doctoral. Paper 306.



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